POEM

ON

The RECOVERY of

The Hon. Mrs. ELIZ. COURTENAY

FROM

Her late DANGEROUS ILLNESS:

Humbly Inscrib'd to

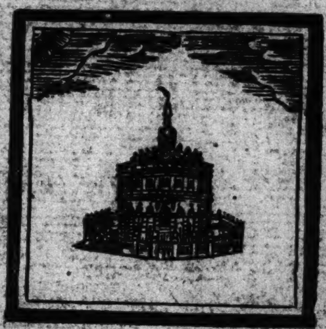
KELLOND COURTENAY, of Painsford, Esq; and his LADY.

Written in the Year 1743.

By Dr. Benjamin Kennicott.

- *Cæptis*
Aspirate meis! - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

The SECOND EDITION.



MDCCXLVII.

POEM

ON

THE RECOVERY OF

THE Hon. Mrs. ELIZ. COURTENAY

FROM

HER late DANGEROUS ILLNESS:

Humbly Inscribed to

Peterborough Court-House, Old Palace Yard.

WRITTEN in the Year 1748.

9.46.4
1668.

MDCCXLVII.

THE PREFACE.

THE Author of the following Poem, having been uncommonly fortunate ſince its Publication, and being indeed indebted to it (under Providence) for the Happineſs he at preſent enjoys, has complied with the Sollicitations of his Acquaintance to give it a New Edition. He at firſt printed but a few Copies; ſuppoſing, that even theſe would have been more than he ſhould ever have had occaſion for; and imagining, that the poor Claim he had to the Character of a Poet, added to his Obſcurity, would entirely have prevented the Neceſſity of a larger number.

But (happy for him!) he has found his Conjectures wrong; for the Greatneſs of his Subject has ſo much overbalanced the Meanneſs of his Poetry, that he has frequently wanted a Copy to preſent to ſome of his worthy Friends. 'Tis the Deſire therefore of obliging and gratifying the Curioſity of Theſe, and not the Hope of pleaſing ſuch as are Strangers to the Author, that has

induced him to this Republication; for as only the former Perſons know, under what diſadvantageous Circumſtances the following Work was compoſed, they alone will read it with that Candour and Forgiving Temper, which the Author is very ſenſible it frequently ſtands in need of.

However, he has not made the leaſt Alteration in this Edition; as his Friends will probably receive it the better, for waiting upon them in its Firſt Dreſs, clad in all its native Honeſty and Plainneſs: and, perhaps, even the Defects in it, as they ſtrongly point out the Young Poet in the Country, will pleaſe more, than if they had been ornamentally corrected, and embelliſhed with all the Spruceneſs of an Univerſity Education.

A POEM.

A POEM, &c.

PARDON the bold Intruſion of a Swain,
Whoſe lowly Muſe aſpires a lofty Strain;
Attempts a tow'ring Flight with feeble Wing,
And tho' born back to Earth, reſolves to ſing.
'Tis Joy, GREAT PAIR, 'tis Joy awakes my Lays,
No Adulation meant, or venal Praiſe:
No need of artful Decorations here,
Let ſterling Worth in genuine Light appear;
Great in Your native Charms YOU ſhine confeſt,
With Dignity of Mind and Manners bleſt,
And he, who aims to give YOU borrow'd Fame,
Sinks his own Credit, and degrades Your Name.

What tho' I ne'er beheld the Muſes Seat,
Nor in the College found a wiſh'd Retreat;
Tho' the fam'd Hill I never ſlept upon,
Nor drank the Waters of the Helicon;
Yet Nature urges, and I muſt obey,
Muſt eaſe my Breaſt, howe'er untun'd my Lay;
My Heart You'll read in STEPHEN'S honeſt Rhymes,
As clear as in the Blaze of POPE'S illuſtrious Lines.

Say not "*What Arrogance*"! Or, "*Whence the Spring,*
"*Embold'ning Meanneſs in our Courts to ſing*"?——
Virtue and Greatneſs are to You the ſame,
You love the Thing, but diſregard the Name;
Whoe'er an honeſt faithful Heart can ſhow,
Aſſures Your Favour, whether High or Low;
Your genial Rays enliven far and near,
Full-beaming here, and gently-warming there.
Juſt ſo the SUN a warmer Influence yields
To bleſt ARABIA's aromatic Fields;
Yet diſtant ZEMBLA feels the chearing Ray,
And hails the Bleſſing of a fainter Day.

Deign then to pardon my exulting Muſe,
Accept the Tribute, which She can't refuſe;
Take the congratulating Line She gives,
Now Heav'n's appeas'd, and fam'd ELIZA lives.
ELIZA lives!——Oh, how ſhall I expreſs [of Verſe.
My Joys!——They ſpurn at Rules, and break the Bounds
Luxuriant Theme! 'Tis this my Breaſt inſpires,
'Tis this my Young Imagination fires;
'Tis this with gen'rous Zeal tranſports my Soul
Beyond what conſcious Meanneſs can controul.

While Incenſe pure this humble Verſe beſtows,
Oh, how my Breaſt with kindling Ardour glows!
Proud to record ſuch Worth, and bleſs the Name,
COURT'NAY, that ſhines thro' all the Rolls of Fame;
Whoſe Blood from ancient GALLIC Princes ſprung,
Nor in the Empire of the EAST unſung:

And MONTAGUE, that lives in num'rous Peers,
That Church and State with RESTORATION chears;
Whoſe Fame and Memory can never die,
While Engliſh Annals live, and Hiſtory.

Now the Two Names (ſo You and Heav'n agree)
Sweetly conſpire in Sacred UNITY:
Bleſt be th' auſpicious Day, and bleſt the Man,
Who with firm Ties this Unity began;
Long may it laſt, and may You live each Hour
Like the Primeval Pair in Eden's Bow'r,
E'er the curs'd Serpent ſhed invenom'd Breath,
And with the ſly Temptation ſcatter'd Death.
Yet cou'd I, in ſublimer Numbers, riſe,
Like His, who ſung the Loſs of Paradiſe;
In Spight of Death I'd raiſe Your Name to be
The Boaſt of Fame to IMMORTALITY.
Deſpiſing Fortune's Frowns, and Envy's Rage,
And all the Cenſure of th' illnatur'd Age;
To ſuch a Pitch I'd raiſe my lofty Song,
The World ſhould hail the Raptures of my Tongue,
While ſweetly flow the high Encomia due
Here to a COURT'NAY, there a MONTAGUE.

But theſe Great Names ſo awe—my Strain ſo poor—
The Theme affrights Me, and I dare no more.
Curb then, vainglorious Muſe, thy Rage betimes,
Nor blaſt their Honours in unhallow'd Rhymes;
Their Arms and ſpreading Titles here conceal,
And hide the Splendour in a Myſtic Vail.

DEEP in the Pleaſures of a bleſt Retreat,
Where Concord reigns, and Wiſdom keeps her Seat;
Where Health and Plenty in the Breezes ride,
Trill thro' the Stream, and o'er the Valley glide;
Where the well-form'd Canal meandring ſtrays,
Which the ſweet mazy Wilderneſs ſurveys;
Where Art's and Nature's mingling Beauties riſe,
Where bloom afreſh the Scenes of Paradiſe;
HONORIO and his VIRTUINA live,
Rich in themſelves, and all that Heav'n can give;
By Birth exalted, by the Great careſs'd,
By Fortune favour'd, and by Nature bleſs'd.

But of all Bleſſings far the greateſt proves
The happy Iſſue of Connubial Loves;
Who now expreſs their rich Parental Mine,
While each Perfection juſt begins to ſhine;
Brighter to ſhine in ſome more manly Page,
Amidſt the Worthies of the riſing Age,
Here the lov'd SON (a pleaſing Sight!) appears,
A Sage in Knowledge, tho' a Child in Years;
How clear the Dawn of Life! how bright the Morn!
What radiant Splendours ſhall his Noon adorn!
I ſee, I ſee his Glorious Days began——
FAME flies before him, and proclaims the Man.
The DAUGHTERS too, uneducated yet,
Shall riſe in Years, with native Worth replete,
Admir'd by All, and courted by the Great;

With ſweeteſt Natures poliſh'd Manners join,
To make Illuſtrious Houſes brighter ſhine.
Theſe their fond Parents fonder Cares employ,
Their future Solace, and their preſent Joy.
Their Social Happineſs I next relate,
And with new Pleaſure on their Converſe wait,
Free, and untainted with the Pride of State.
Look, how their Aſpect brightens, when they ſee
Wiſe, pleaſant, or well-natur'd Company!
See, how they're fluſh'd with Joy, when ſuch they find
To raiſe the Spirits, and regale the Mind!
Now the Debates on Graver Subjects ſhine,
Now Wit and Humour ſparkle with the Wine;
Now Grand Events from Hiſtory they trace,
Then lighter Topics, of the Ring, or Race:
Yet all ſo mix'd, that all in all agree
To keep up Univerſal Harmony.

Thus, while among the various Objects round,
Each teems with Joy, and Joy by Virtue crown'd;
All things conſpire their Proſpect to improve,
And give freſh Reliſh to the balmy Grove.
'Tis here HONORIO makes his calm Retreat
From wrangling Councils, and the Cares of State;
With upright Soul, and ſteady Virtue warm,
As CATO left the Senate for the Farm.
And here his VIRTUINA, with her Lord,
Sick at the Farce th' ignobly Great ador'd,
Retires——and here that other Book they ſcan,
And ſtudy Nature, as they ſtudied Man.

'Tis here thro' ev'ry pleaſing Scene they rove,
Their halcyon Days in ſweet Succeſſion move,
And ſtill they wake to Joy, and live to Love.

But ah!——The fluctuating Joys below,
Like Euripus, uncertain ebb and flow,
And here we mourn a ſudden Flux of Woe.

For now, while Flora all her Treaſure ſpreads,
Around them ſmiles, and ſpangles all the Meads;
Now while the feather'd Choirs in Conſort ſing,
And hail them with the Muſic of the Spring:
DEATH, growing envious, with an hoſtile Aim,
Frowns at their Joys, and makes his haughty Claim:
"This bright'ning Scene (ſays he) ſhall ſoon be turn'd,
"And deep in Sable ſhall my Pow'r be mourn'd;
"Mine is the Fame all human Bliſs to pall,
"And daſh the Cup of Happineſs with Gall:
"Yon noxious HERB *, my dread Commiſſion bear,
"And to that Dome, at dusky Eve repair."

At dusky Eve, th' inſidious Herb obeys,
Their fav'rite Greens the HAPPY PAIR ſurveys;
She eats, nor doubts the fatal Sallad good,
'Till the dire Venom rages in her Blood;
The tainted Current thrills in ev'ry Vein,
And Tortures all her vital Pow'rs ſuſtain:
Now o'er her Sight the miſty Vapours riſe,
She faints——and Darkneſs ſhades her ſwimming Eyes;
Now all compos'd She lies ſerenely Great,
Plum'd for the Skies, and waits the Voice of Fate.

* *This is an Alluſion to the Cauſe of her Ladyſhip's Illneſs; which was a Poiſonous Herb, that lay conceal'd among ſome Water-Creſſes, which were ſerv'd up at Supper.*

While inborn Vigour ſcarce upholds the Strife,
And Death hangs hov'ring o'er the Verge of Life;
The pale Domeſtics hang the drooping Head,
As if their Comfort with her Health was fled;
Loud they lament, the Walls receive the Moan,
Attentive hear, and eccho Groan to Groan.

HONORIO ſtands, with deeper Anguiſh preſt,
Unvented Sorrow ſwells his throbbing Breaſt;
Sighs thickning upon Sighs upheaving flow,
In vain he ſtruggles with th'emboſom'd Woe;
He bends impaſſion'd o'er——then back he turns,
Striking his penſive Breaſt, and thus he mourns——
"Propitious HEAV'N! Oh, longer, longer lend
"The tend'reſt Conſort, and the trueſt Friend!
"In Her, the deareſt, beſt of Mothers ſpare,
"Longer to exerciſe Maternal Care;
"Her blooming Offspring wiſely to controul,
"Refine their Manners, and improve their Soul;
"To teach their young Affections where to twine,
"And each ingenial Beauty how to ſhine!
"In Her let theſe Dear Babes Compaſſion find,
"And be to Me, in Her, profuſely kind!
"Ill could We part, tho' ſilver'd o'er by Time;
"But thus to tear her from Me, in her Prime!
"How can I bear, or how my Life ſuſtain,
"Under this Great Hyperbole of Pain!
"Avert it, POW'RS SUPREME! I NOW implore,
"Grant Me this Boon, on Earth I ask no more."

He bows reſign'd——and ſtrait, to ſhow their Zeal,
The Choir of MUSES with the GRACES kneel;
For theſe were all aſſembled round her Bed,
Struck with the Tortures of their Fav'rite Maid.

Here, in ſad ſolemn Silence, each appears,
And drops the moving Eloquence of Tears;
Then all break out, and upward flies a Pray'r,
Fill'd with the Vows of each Celeſtial Fair.

But how ſhall I th' exalted Strains rehearſe,
Immortal Fervours in a mortal Verſe!
What wond'rous Words, what Numbers ſhall I join,
To ſound the Extaſy of Warmth Divine!

You only here can aid, Ye tuneful Pow'rs,
Impart that Energy the Bard implores;
Let all the Raptures, on your Minds impreſt,
Flow ſmoothly down into his op'ning Breaſt;
Into his Soul transfuſe Your Airs Divine,
And make Your Ardours glow in ev'ry Line.

Fond, fooliſh Thought! For this my Breaſt's too weak,
Nor can my Tongue the Inſpiration ſpeak;
Yet here to ſing in humble Lines I'll dare,
And thus or imitate, or feign a Pray'r.

"PHOEBUS! Propitious Source of Phyſic's Art!
"Hear!——and thy Salutary Aid impart!
"No vulgar Suppliants now approach thy Shrine,
"Bow gracious——and receive the Pray'r Divine!
"Be here, be here thy ſwift Aſſiſtance giv'n,
"Shew VIRTUINA is the Care of Heav'n!
"Not a vain Belle does here our Warmth employ,
"Whoſe Life's Amuſement, and whoſe Bliſs a Toy;

"No mean rich Mortal, who on Wealth elate,
"Sinks into Greatneſs, and is poor in State:
"But a fine Woman, little underſtood,
"Wiſe, courteous, friendly, generous, and good;
"In whom the modern Contradictions meet,
"Of being Humble, and of being Great,
"Of knowing how to ſtoop, yet how to keep her State:
"One, in whom Dignity of Manners dwells,
"And who in Virtue, as in Rank, excells;
"One, who in Elegance of Breeding ſhines,
"And ev'ry Female Excellence refines;
"One, who ne'er ſpeaks, but each with Pleaſure glows,
"And from whoſe Tongue exalted Candour flows:
"Muſt She, ſuch Worth, enrich the Grave ſo ſoon!
"Muſt all this Splendour be eclips'd, e'er Noon!
"What, juſt careſs'd, and loſt; admir'd, and mourn'd;
"With all of Manners, all of Arts adorn'd!
"What, rich in Science, skill'd in ev'ry Strain,
"Lov'd by the World, and dear to Heav'n——in vain!
"Thou, who to Medicine doſt Virtue give,
"And from ten thouſand Ails loſt Health retrieve;
"In this important Moment ſhew thy Love,
"And ſend the Goddeſs SALUS from above."

With Words like theſe, but more exalted far,
They wing th' emphatical important Pray'r;
When ready PHOEBUS nods his glad Aſſent,
And iſſues Orders for her ſwift Deſcent;

"Haſte, fly to Earth where VIRTUINA lies,
"Without your vivifying Aid She dies;
"You'll find my Son the skill'd MACHAON, there,

" Pleas'd he'll conduct You to the mourning Pair.
" If Man the Fort of Life could have maintain'd,
" His were the Hands that had the Conqueſt gain'd:
" But here the Poiſon the whole Maſs aſſails,
" Nor Acid here nor Alkali avails;
" Nothing can reach it, but a Skill Divine,
" Aid then the Means, and with his Method join."

Swift as the Lightning, down the bending Skies,
With Air ſerene, the roſy GODDESS flies;
Her bright ſalubrious Beams are inſtant ſpread,
And in She walks, by lov'd MACHAON led.
Joy from Her Preſence ev'ry Eye derives,
She breathes——and VIRTUINA ſtrait revives;
She pours new Vigour, ſtops the frequent Sigh,
Fluſhes the Cheek, and beams the lifeleſs Eye;
Then bids new Strength th' enfeebled Frame ſuſtain,
And raiſe it gradual from the Bed of Pain.

But as at Sea, when Winds the Surface ſweep,
And toſs the Surges of the foaming Deep;
Soon you ſhall ſee the angry Tempeſt ceaſe,
And all the Watry World lie huſh'd in Peace:
When ÆOLUS awakes his Sons again,
And rouzes with redoubled Rage the Main;
The furious Billows, with tremendous Roar,
Bound o'er the Rocks, and laſh the trembling Shore;
Now yawning deep ſubſide, then tow'ring riſe,
Tumble their Mountains high, and thunder to the Skies.
So here, tho' all the former Pangs are laid,
And all around appear ſerenely glad;

Yet more than former Agonies return,
And deeper now the pleas'd Spectators mourn.
For DEATH defeated, yet averſe to yield,
Summons more grim Battalions to the Field,
Spreads his Artillery for ev'ry Part,
Leads up the aſſault himſelf, and ſtorms the Heart.
Tremendous Sight!——She faints! She almoſt dies!
Heav'n ſeems unguarded for the freſh Surprize.
Raſh Thought! The GODDESS dares him to advance,
And with dread Accent thus arreſts his Lance;
"Know, envious Fiend, my Voice ſhall be obey'd,
"Hence then, and hide Thee in the Realms of Shade."
Inſtant She Life recalls, and warms her Brain,
Her Spirits riſe re-animate again;
Life's active Pow'rs freſh vig'rous Health diſplay,
And ſullen DEATH reluctant quits his Prey.
Juſt ſo the LION at the guarded Fold,
Whetted by Hunger, and with Fury bold,
Attacks and reattacks the Shepherd's Care,
He foams, he roars, looks round with dreadful Glare;
'Till forc'd by Pow'r ſuperior to his own,
He turns indignant with a ſurly Frown.
Thus HEAV'N, in this ſucceſſive Gloom of Grief,
Hears Earth's united Vows, and gives Relief,
Shifts the Black Scene, the Tragedy is o'er,
Joy reigns, where Horrour tyranniz'd before.
HONORIO, deepeſt in the former Woe,
Shares moſt in Tranſport, and in Wonder now:
Each MUSE, each GRACE, looks up with glad Surprize;
Raptures, unutter'd, ſparkling in their Eyes.

Now SALUS, pleas'd her Message to improve,
Returns in Triumph to her SIRE above;
And as thro' each Ethereal World She flies,
Bids Joy on Joy with IO PÆANS rise;
Loud IO PÆANS ring from Skies to Skies.

EARTH takes th' Alarm; and all the Good below,
Who hear the joyous Tale, with Pleasure glow;
E'en I, the meaneſt of the tuneful Train,
To Joy and Praiſe devote this humble Strain;
Proud to th' exulting World this News to tell,
Grief's Emphaſis is hush'd, and VIRTUNA's well.

THUS —— when the SUN has uſher'd in the Morn,
And the proud Sky his radiant Beams adorn;
Frequent You ſee a watry Fog ariſe,
Which with thin Vapour faln wou'd vail the Skies;
When ſoon the riſing Light, with piercing Ray,
Scatters the Miſt, and brightens up the Day.
But oft by Winds a thicker Cloud is hurl'd,
Which with deep Sable ſhades the darken'd World;
Thro' Heav'n's Expanſe it ſpreads th' impending Rain,
And pours a Torrent o'er the mourning Plain;
No Warblers chant, no Sylvan Scenes invite,
Nor Hills give Beauty, nor the Vales delight.
At laſt the SUN, with more collected Rays,
Breaks thro' the Darkneſs in a fiercer Blaze;
When all the pitchy Vapours fleet away,
And ſwell the GLORIOUS TRIUMPH of the DAY.

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM